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New Peer Listening Program Begins March 4

Summary: Beginning Monday, March 4, Peer Listening interns Kristina Grundmanis '13 and Andrew Gelbmann '13 will be available to students seeking advice and campus resources.

(February 21, 2013)-This spring, a new program at the University of Minnesota, Morris will offer students a free after-hours listening service. The program, Peer Listening, will provide supportive listening and decision-making assistance as well as referrals for various campus services in a non-judgmental environment. Peer Listening will also provide upper-division interns with practical experience helping others.

Peer Listening interns will offer supportive listening and referral services rather than mental health counseling. Kristina Grundmanis '13, Minneapolis, and Andrew Gelbmann '13, White Bear Lake, are the first interns to serve the program. The two—both of whom major in psychology and liberal arts for the human services—are enthusiastic about implementing this new service.

“Peer Listeners is a way for students to make a game plan for what’s going on in their lives,” says Grundmanis. “It will be available to help facilitate relationships and to help [students] be successful at Morris. We’re here to help [students] navigate and find where things are.”

According to Gelbmann, “Peer Listeners is designed as a sounding board for anyone who is needing a listener. It’s also meant to serve as a campus resource directory for all students. We have so many resources. I hope we’ll be the ones who help people learn to access them.”

In addition to offering listening and resource services, both Grundmanis and Gelbmann will spend a significant portion of their internships creating a training plan for future listeners. According to Grundmanis, they are “working on securing [the program’s] future.” Both she and Gelbmann hope Peer Listening will continue to be a valuable resource even after they have graduated.

As of Monday, March 4, a Peer Listening intern will be available in Briggs 323 on Mondays from 6 until 9 p.m., on Wednesdays from 8 until 10 p.m., and on Thursdays from 7 until 9 p.m. While students are able to make listening appointments via Google Calendar, walk-ins are always welcome. For more information, please contact Erica Karger-Gatzow, counselor, at 320-580-6060 or ekarger@morris.umn.edu.

Peer Listeners is supported by Student Counseling.

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